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Statement submitted by IBREA Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Turning ideas into actual results is perhaps one of the most challenging tasks we face as human beings. The UN has gone a long way in creating a global agenda that all countries adhere to politically and intellectually. As it has been recognized in many forums, to implement that agenda, there needs to be a collective effort from all actors, ranging from corporations, the media, academic community, to civil society. As the UN and its members are working to turn these commitments into real outcomes, IBREA Foundation would like to offer the following recommendations, which stem from our experience working on the ground with the people, and from our understanding of the human brain and body.

1. People are the key. We are talking about human issues, so the centre of those issues is people. When it comes to engaging people, beyond educating in the classic sense of the word, we need to motivate, and help them find it in themselves to work towards the SDGs in their daily lives and choices. People should feel a part of the implementation process, rather than feel it is a moral commitment of exceptional individuals or something that comes with an authority role in the government or other sector. People should understand that we are working on this together and that everyone is important.

2. Start with what you can do. The SDGs are the loftiest goals that we all share, but we need steps to get there, the steps that are possible in each moment for each collaborating actor. All that "small" work, if it is on the right track, will accumulate and eventually lead to the desired, bigger goals. We suggest all actors accept their own limitations and realities, and just move forward to the best of their ability.

3. Check regularly. Checking that we are on the right track, that the money and effort spent is actually getting us a step closer to achieving the SDGs is crucial. If not, then we have to proactively evaluate, take corrective action, and improve our efficiency. If we miss the things that are not working, and fool ourselves for the sake of a good image, we end up wasting a lot of energy and money, resulting in physical and mental fatigue. Accepting the reality (at least internally) without covering anything is important.

4. Communicate well. When it comes to communication on the SDGs implementation process, we can spend a lot of time talking about things that might not be essential, or that we do not all genuinely have an interest in. Let us talk about what truly matters. Let us also make sure we communicate what we all care about. Often times, we talk for the sake of talking but are the people in the conversation all genuinely caring about the subject? If not, then we need to change the subject, find one that all the people involved in the communication truly care about and share a concern for.